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Anarchists Need to Drop the Adjectives

Nicky Reid

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Every decade or so anarchism seems to find its way back into the limelight for another 15 minutes. We're usually roundly vilified but it still offers us a rare window to attract the non-political class and shop around our ideas. In the late nineties, we had the Anti-Globalization Movement and the Battle of Seattle. About a decade and change later we had the Occupy Movement and today I believe we may be approaching another 15-minute window with the uprisings against the grotesque overreach of our post-modern police state. The seemingly unique thing about this latest upsurge in stateless insurrection is that it appears to have two bipolar sources, one on the left and one on the right. On the left we have the rise of an old but reinvigorated movement known as Antifa, engaging in fantastic displays of direct action with the state across the Pacific Northwest. On the right we have the more libertarian Boogaloo Movement, creating their own powerful brand of confrontational street theatre with their heavily armed and well-organized marches on state capitols across the heartland. Both groups are autonomously decentralized and stateless in nature and outlook. But

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both groups represent opposing ends of the ideological anarchist spectrum.

All in all, this need not be a bad thing and it really isn't that unusual either. Anarchism has always been a movement that defies and transcends the traditional left-right spectrum. But attempt to suggest as much online and just wait for the bricks to fly.

Contrary to the popular caricature of the tattooed green-haired vagabond like myself, anarchism is an almost mind-bogglingly diverse ecosystem of fantastic radical freaks. Travel into this jungle online and you will find yourself amidst a teeming forest of colorful countercultures. You have your modern day barbarians of anarcho-primitivism, your cyber punk geeks of crypto-anarchism, your dandy nihilist outlaws of egoism, and your maligned heathen LARPer's of National-Anarchism. But most of my fellow anarcho-freaks can find themselves beneath one of two major ideological umbrellas. The red leftists of anarcho-communism and the right-libertarians of anarcho-capitalism, and here is where my beloved stateless ecosystem finds itself in the eternal conflict that threatens to spoil our latest fifteen minutes of zeitgeist defining public imagination.

The internet is lousy with ancoms and ancaps wasting their precious intellect shitposting on each other's perceived flaws, to the degree that many have foolishly come to see the other as a bigger enemy than the state itself. According to your average ancom keyboard guerrilla, an anarcho-capitalist is a greedy, self-absorbed, commodity fetishist who wants nothing less perverse than to hand over the reigns of power to major corporations and usher in a new era of puppy eating Social Darwinism. And according to your average ancap social media maven, an anarcho-communist is but a knuckle-dragging, quasi-Maoist, rube out to round up everybody's private property and declare the year zero. Both of these representations bare little resemblance to reality and both sides would likely quickly realize this if they could get past their kneejerk revulsion to heavily loaded labels like communist and capitalist. The anarcho-

interpretations of both are far from incompatible and even farther from anything you'll find in a mainstream history book, and this is where anarchy without adjectives comes into play.

Developed in a time of far greater social upheaval than ours, anarchism without adjectives was designed by a couple of Spaniards named Ricardo Mella and Fernando Terrida del Marmol in the 1880's to end the eternal bitching of their eras own communists and individualists, and unite them under a single game plan to annihilate the state they both despised first and then sort out the less dyer details along the way to a new stateless society. It was always intended to be more of a strategy than an ideology and it ended up being adopted by some of the era's greatest and most diverse anarchist minds, like the so-called Italian Lenin, Errico Malatesta, and the mother of American Individualist Feminism, Voltarine de Cleyre, before their 15 minutes blew up into an unfortunate fit of headline-grabbing assassinations.

To me anarchism without adjectives always made sense as more than just a strategy because I've always been something of an anarchist with a thousand adjectives. DeLeonist libertarian socialism will always be my first love because of my childhood infatuation with Marxism and my lifelong fixation with the full spectrum direct democracy of radical syndicalism. But my devotion to a stateless Queer nation has come to be the most significant motivator for my continued dedication to smashing the state and in a twist even I didn't see coming, I've come to see typically ancap philosophies like the Non-Aggression Principle and Agorism as the best ways to achieve my goals for a new humane society without fucking it up like my forefathers did with a bunch of dick-wagging initiatory violence.

And that's what I love about anarchism without adjectives. It allows us to erase silly ideological lines and allows everyone with something stateless to offer, a place at the table. It's a veritable market place of non-dogmatic ideologies competing in real time. The only real absolute is that everything must be voluntary. Noth-

ing must be coerced. As long as every idea, every new society, remains a choice, it remains kosher for a new revolutionary era of exploration. Wanna live like a barbarian in a torch lit cave without the evils of polyfibers and plumbing? Fuck it, make it voluntary and give it a shot. Wanna create a new Kowloon Walled City of cyberpunk capitalist debauchery? Fuck it, make it voluntary and give it a shot. Wanna create a post-apocalyptic red light republic of genderfuck neon haired syndicates? Fuck it, I'm gonna make it voluntary, and give it a shot.

The future is simply too unpredictable for doctrinaire model building bullshit and dogmatic absolutes. When Western Society finally collapses beneath the weight of its own imperial hubris, you and I will see more revolutionary changes evolve in the first 15 seconds than we've seen in the last 1500 years. The only way for anarchism to survive the coming cataclysm is to remain united by a collective open mind to the endless possibilities of the greatest upheaval this planet has seen since the dinosaurs. Antifa and Boogaloo both have all the right ideas, they just need to respect each other's right to approach those ideas from different directions and remain open to the possibility that somebody outside their circle might know something they don't. Otherwise, we're just going to blow another 15 minutes on shitposting and ballyhoo and it might be the last 15 minutes we got.

If humanity has a future, it's anarchism. If anarchism has a future, it's without adjectives. Let's make it fucking happen people. Some tattooed green haired vagabond believes in you.